

power of \* providing' to benefices was the encouragement it gave to Simony among the clergy of the national churches. 'Lady Meed' (bribery), as Langland says, \* is privy with the Pope; provisors it knowen ; Sir Simonie and herself assealen the bulls.'<sup>1</sup> Orders and places in the English Church could be obtained at Borne by persons quite unfit to fill them, persons who would have been refused in England.<sup>2</sup>

It is a remarkable fact that throughout the fourteenth century, in spite of the degradation of the Captivity at Avignon, the Pope succeeded in keeping English patronage in his hand. If the King and the Church had united to wrest it from him they must have succeeded ; for the laity, as represented by Parliament, were continually urging them to take strong measures. But the King preferred the short-sighted policy of securing his immediate ends by alliance with the Pope, and the Church was growing cold to all demands for reform. She was no longer led by such fiery saints as Grossetute and Hugh of Lincoln. Her modern Bishops had risen to the bench by the diligent accumulation of offices in Church and State. They were tolerant of all the ways and means by which they themselves had risen. They regarded the Bale of benefices by the Pope, with the same affection with which guardsmen who had bought their way up the army regarded the Purchase system when it was first attacked. Who could expect the Primate or Spencer of Norwich to forget that they had obtained their promotion by personal suit at the Papal Palace? Not only the Bishops, but most of the higher prelates and even the well-to-do rectors, who had risen by the methods of Simony then recognised, and might hope thereby to rise further, were naturally indifferent or opposed to any attack on the established system. It is not surprising that the reform movement found support only in the ranks of under-paid vicars or poor priests who had no benefices. The scapegoats of the system alone were hearty in its condemnation. The attack on Papal usurpations came from the laity headed by a few malcontents of the lower clergy. The officials only moved to suppress rebellion, and did nothing to

<sup>1</sup> P. *PL*, A, iii. 142-3, and 0» Hi. 243; *Vox Clam\**, felc. Hi caps. I a, 14 \* Wilkins, iii. 864, sees. xxix. and xxxvii\*